



Missouri Department of Economic Development

MISSOURI BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES APPLICATION PERIOD: August 15, 2022 – September 29, 2022

The Missouri Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program (Program) helps providers, communities, counties, and regions invest in building broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas of the state through competitive grants. In the FY2023 budget, \$265 million was appropriated for this Program. The Department of Economic Development will hold multiple funding rounds in Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024).

Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program funds originate from the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund and the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund.

1. Authority and Funding

The federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) (Pub. L. 117 2) created the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF) (42 U.S.C. § 802) for aid to states to mitigate the fiscal effects stemming from the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health emergency, and the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF) (42 U.S.C. § 804) for aid to states to "carry out critical capital projects directly enabling work, education, and health monitoring, including remote options," in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The State of Missouri (State) entered into agreements with and received an allocation of funds under both the SFRF and CPF from the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury). The SFRF is further implemented by Treasury through regulations ([31 CFR part 35](#)) and other guidance. The CPF is further implemented by Treasury through guidance.

Both the SFRF and the CPF can be used for broadband infrastructure projects, as further described in section 5 of these Guidelines, "Eligible Projects."

Through House Bill 3020 (2022), consistent with Governor Parson's request, the Missouri General Assembly appropriated to the Department of Economic Development (DED) \$250 million from the funds for broadband infrastructure and \$15 million for utility pole replacement, with 50% flexibility, (§ 20.370 and § 20.371 of HB 3020) for the State's 2023

fiscal year—July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. Of that total, approximately \$197 million is from the CPF and \$68 million is from the SFRF.

2. Funding Cycle

DED plans to hold multiple funding rounds from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024. For the initial funding round, applications may be submitted beginning August 15, 2022, and the round will close on September 29, 2022. Dates for future rounds will be announced at the close of each round until all funds are awarded. Updates will be announced on the Office of Broadband Development webpage.

3. Eligible Applicants

3.1. Applicants eligible for grants awarded include:

- (a) Corporations;
- (b) Partnerships;
- (c) Limited liability companies;
- (d) Nonprofit organizations;
- (e) Local governments;
- (f) Rural electric cooperatives organized under chapter 394 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri and their broadband affiliates;
- (g) Telephone cooperatives, as defined in § 386.020(55); and
- (h) Public-private partnerships, with private or nonprofit partners that are registered in this state.

3.2. All entities required to register with the Missouri Secretary of State to conduct business in the State must be registered and in good standing.

3.3. Applicants that are debarred or suspended are not eligible.

3.4. The SFRF regulation requires that for as long as the SFRF-funded infrastructure is in use that provides service to households, the provider must participate in the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) through the lifetime of the ACP, or otherwise provide access to a broad-based affordability program to low-income consumers in the proposed service area that provides benefits to households commensurate with those provided under the ACP.

3.5. CPF guidance requires awarded applicants, or subrecipients, must offer at least one low-cost option without data usage caps and at speeds that are sufficient for a household with multiple users to simultaneously telework and engage in remote learning.

4. Eligible Projects

Broadband infrastructure projects meeting the following criteria are eligible for funding under this Program:

4.1. The project is designed to meet a critical need of the community to be served, as is related to access, affordability, reliability, and/or consistency. Applicants must document their justification for critical need.

- (a) Treasury's Guidance for the Coronavirus CPF requires DED to consider whether the broadband service options offered by subrecipients will be affordable to their target markets in the proposed service area. DED will therefore prioritize projects addressing critical need related to access and affordability.

4.2. Grants will be subject to the following limitations:

- (a) Project minimum grant amount: \$100,000;
- (b) Project maximum grant amount: \$10 million; and
- (c) Applicant maximum for Program: \$100 million.

4.3. The project must have local support, which applicant must demonstrate through letters from local community leaders, or by feedback from conducting public outreach.

4.4. The project will serve one of the following areas, based upon the most recent available data from the FCC Form 477, or similar, updated data:

- (a) An unserved area, which is a project area without access to wireline or fixed wireless broadband internet service with speeds of at least 25 Megabits per second (Mbps) download and 3 Mbps upload.
- (b) An underserved area, which is a project area without access to wireline or fixed wireless broadband internet service with speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

If the applicant believes the available broadband service is overstated in the FCC Form 477 data, the applicant must provide additional information sufficient to demonstrate that the proposed service area is, in fact, unserved or underserved so as to be eligible for grant funding.

Applications must include a map file (acceptable formats: .shp, .kml, or .kmz) of the proposed service area.

4.5. Proposed service areas of a project must be contiguous, servicing a connected area while limiting gaps in service. There must not be large distances between planned fiber routes. Applicants looking to service multiple areas should consider submitting separate applications for each area.

- (a) DED reserves the right to reject applications if it appears that an applicant is intentionally splitting otherwise compact projects to avoid the contiguity requirement while leaving areas between the projects unserved or underserved.
- (b) If an applicant is expanding their existing service or awarded areas, and submits a proposed service area that is noncontiguous or leaves gaps in the service area, applicants must include information justifying the non-contiguous nature of the proposed service area including how the project will not leave stranded unserved or underserved locations in the general area.

4.6. The infrastructure is designed to deliver, upon project completion, service that reliably meets or exceeds symmetrical download and upload speeds of 100 Mbps.

- (a) If it is not practicable, because of geography, topography, or excessive cost, for a project to be designed to deliver services at such a speed, the project must be

designed so that it reliably meets or exceeds 100 Mbps download speeds and between 20 Mbps and 100 Mbps upload speeds, and be scalable to a minimum of 100 Mbps symmetrical for download and upload speeds. Such projects must provide documentation with the application demonstrating why achieving 100 Mbps upload speed is impracticable at this time.

4.7. DED will prioritize investments in fiber-optic infrastructure, but other technology is eligible.

4.8. The project must achieve:

- (a) Last-mile connections— network infrastructure that carries signals from the network to and from the home or business; or
- (b) Middle-mile connections that facilitate last-mile connections. In order to be eligible, middle-mile projects must demonstrate that new and/or improved last-mile commitments are in place.

4.9. The project's proposed service area must not include an area in which a provider has an enforceable federal and or state funding commitment to which will reliably deliver speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

- (a) For example, project areas where high-cost support from the federal Universal Service Fund has been received by rate of return carriers, funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Broadband Infrastructure Program, or where any other federal funding has been awarded to provide broadband service at speeds of 100/20 Mbps will not receive Program funding.

4.10. Grant funds shall not be used to serve any retail end user that already has access to wireline or fixed wireless broadband internet service of speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

4.11. The project must be operational by September 30, 2026.

5. Project Budget

As part of the application, the applicant will need to submit a budget for the proposed project. The following principles will apply regarding costs that are eligible for reimbursement with ARPA funds.

5.1. Funds will be disbursed to a subrecipient on a reimbursement basis.

5.2. Funds may only be used to carry out the project.

5.3. Both SFRF and CPF funds must be expended by September 30, 2026. SFRF funds, however, must be obligated by the State by December 31, 2024. Any costs incurred or paid after the expenditure deadline will not be eligible for reimbursement.

5.4. Costs incurred after March 3, 2021 but prior to DED's award of a grant for the project are eligible for reimbursement.

5.5. Treasury, by [2 CFR § 1000.10](#), has adopted the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, set forth at [2 CFR part 200](#) (Uniform Guidance). There are cost

principles in the Uniform Guidance that apply to this Program that are not repeated in full in these Guidelines. Subrecipients will need to comply with all applicable cost principles and other requirements in the Uniform Guidance.

5.6. Examples of eligible project costs are:

- (a) Construction of broadband facilities;
- (b) Engineering and construction plans;
- (c) Permitting;
- (d) Installation;
- (e) Pole replacement or placement, but only as one component of a project otherwise eligible under section 4 of these Guidelines. Applicants seeking to fund pole replacement/attachment costs will need to demonstrate that they have cooperation from pole owners within the project area;
- (f) Make-ready costs;
- (g) Validation of service; and
- (h) Grant administration costs, the chart below provides per project maximum grant administration amounts. If it is the intent of the applicant to use Program funds for the purpose of grant administration, grant administration activities must be included in the project budget as a separate item.

Total Project Cost	Maximum Allowable Grant Administration Cost
Greater than or equal to \$1 million, and less than \$5 million	Lesser of 4% of the Program grant amount or \$55,000
Greater than or equal to \$5 million, and less than \$10 million	\$65,000
Greater than or equal to \$10 million	\$85,000

5.7. Examples of ineligible project costs include:

- (a) General broadband planning not associated with the project;
- (b) Operational expenses;
- (c) Middle-mile infrastructure that is not essential to servicing last mile projects;
- (d) Costs to procure or obtain certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment as set forth in [2 CFR § 200.216](#) and [2 CFR § 200.471](#);
- (e) Acquisition of spectrum licenses;
- (f) Short-term operating leases;
- (g) Payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments, or other debt service costs incurred prior to March 15, 2021;
- (h) Fees or issuance costs associated with the issuance of new debt;
- (i) Satisfaction of any obligation arising under or pursuant to a settlement agreement, judgment, consent decree, or judicially confirmed debt restructuring plan in a judicial, administrative, or regulatory proceeding; or
- (j) To support or oppose collective bargaining; this does not affect the ability to use funds to comply with [41 CFR § 60-1.4](#).
- (k) Grant administration costs greater than the amounts allowed in section 5.6 of these Guidelines.

5.8. Additional notes on funding:

- (a) Reimbursement requests may be submitted monthly and must include supporting documentation for the costs incurred.
- (b) Specific documentation requirements will be identified separately.
- (c) Subrecipients will receive an 85% reimbursement for the eligible costs submitted each month; the

remaining 15% reimbursement will be available upon completion of the final inspection and grant closeout.

- (d) DED reserves the right to amend the scope of grant awards or partially fund applications. Such amendments would only be made with the cooperation of the applicant in situations where the score for a project would not be materially changed as a result of the amendment as compared to the application as submitted. Examples are:
 - (i) There is a successful challenge to part of a project's proposed service area and changes can be made to the application to carve out the challenged area; or
 - (ii) If the remaining funds in the Program will not fully fund the next project in line for funding, but the applicant desires to modify its project to utilize remaining funding available, rather than no longer be considered for funding.
- (e) DED requests proposals for phased projects when possible. Applicants will be asked to detail the phasing approach and the approximate cost for each phase of the work plan.

6. Matching Funding

6.1. DED is not requiring applicants to provide a cost match. However:

- (a) Prioritization will be given to projects for which the applicant is including a private funding match of at least 20%.
- (b) Additional credit will be given to projects receiving local government funding.

Credit will be provided on a graduated scale to applicants that exceed the 20% match prioritization.

7. Service Area Challenge Process

7.1. To ensure transparency and best use of taxpayer funds, the application process includes a proposed service area challenge process, as follows:

- (a) Within fifteen business days of the close of the grant application period, DED will publish on its website the proposed projects' service areas, and the proposed broadband internet speeds for each application.
- (b) A broadband internet service provider that provides existing service in or adjacent to a proposed service area may submit to DED, within 30 days of publication, a written challenge to an application based on its proposed service area. The challenge must contain information and documentation demonstrating that:
 - (i) The challenging provider currently provides broadband internet service to retail customers within the proposed service area; or
 - (ii) The challenging provider has begun substantive construction to provide broadband internet service to retail customers within the proposed service area; or
 - (iii) The challenging provider has an enforceable commitment to provide broadband internet service to retail customers within the proposed service area in a timeframe similar to that proposed for the applicant's project.
- (c) Within three business days of receiving a challenge, DED will notify the applicant of such challenge.
- (d) A challenge will succeed when DED determines that, for the proposed project service area, the challenger:
 - (i) Currently provides broadband services meeting baseline speed of 100/ 20 Mbps; or
 - (ii) Has begun construction to provide such services; or
 - (iii) Has an enforceable commitment to provide broadband internet service at speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps and scalable to higher speeds to the proposed service area in a timeframe similar to that

proposed for the applicant's project.

- (e) DED reserves the right to request additional information from a challenging provider to substantiate the challenge.
- (f) Upon DED's determination that a challenge is successful, DED will not fund the challenged portion of an application. DED will notify the applicant and the challenging provider of its decision. DED will incorporate challenge results into its approvals and denials of Program applications.

7.2. DED will post on its website a list of challenges found to be successful and the service areas affected by those challenges.

7.3. For each challenge found to be successful, the challenger must submit documentation to DED no later than 12 months from the Program award date substantiating that the challenger has fulfilled its commitment made during its challenge.

7.4. If DED denies an application as a result of a challenge, and the challenging provider does not fulfill its commitment to provide broadband internet service in the service area, DED will not consider another challenge from that provider for any remaining Program grant rounds, unless DED determines the challenging provider's failure to fulfill the commitment was due to unforeseeable and disastrous circumstances beyond the challenger's control, including, but not limited to: flood, tornado, earthquake, or civil unrest, and such provider took reasonable steps to complete the project in light of the circumstances.

8. Grant Application Submission

Applications and all supporting documents will be submitted electronically through the DED ARPA Grant Portal. Potential applicants are encouraged to create an account at the portal.

The grant application portal will open on August 15, with applications due by September 29. Grant award notifications will be issued 75 days after the close of the application period.

In preparation for submitting an application, grant applicants are encouraged to have information and documents ready and available. In many instances documents will need to be uploaded as an attachment to the grant application. Being prepared will help assure a timely application process, as well as assist applicants in ensuring a complete and accurate application is submitted.

8.1. An applicant must be registered in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov), and will need to provide its Unique Entity ID that is generated by SAM.gov (Note: DUNS numbers have been removed from SAM.gov as of April 4, 2022—existing registered entities can find their Unique Entity ID by visiting the Sam.gov web site and following the instructions for requesting a Unique Entity ID). If an applicant is in process in obtaining its Unique Entity ID, that will be satisfactory; however, no payments will be made to a subrecipient until it has a Unique Entity ID.

8.2. An applicant must include with its application a workforce labor plan that details how the applicant will, in its procurement decisions for the project:

- (a) Implement high safety and training standards (e.g., professional certification, licensure, and/or robust in-house training);
- (b) Hire local workers and/or workers from historically disadvantaged communities;
- (c) Work with qualified, well trained and well compensated workforce; and
- (d) Directly employ their workforce or have policies and practices to ensure contractors and subcontractors

meet high labor standards.

8.3. Subrecipients will be required to document compliance with its workforce labor plans and report to DED regarding compliance on a periodic basis throughout the project duration.

8.4. Applicant must disclose any recent violations of federal and state labor and employment laws.

8.5. Entities must show they are compliant with state sales and withholding tax laws to be eligible for funding. To register to obtain the Statement of No Tax Due, visit [No Tax Due \(mo.gov\)](https://tax.mo.gov).

8.6. DED will require documentation of the following to be submitted with an application for this Program:

- (a) Proposed project budget; and
- (b) Documentation showing the project is designed to meet a critical need of the community to be served, as required in section 4.1 of these Guidelines; and
- (c) If the proposed service area is not an unserved or underserved area based on FCC Form 477 data, additional information sufficient to demonstrate that the proposed service area is, in fact, unserved or underserved; and
- (d) If the project is funding middle-mile infrastructure, additional information demonstrating last-mile commitments associated with the project; and
- (e) A map file (acceptable formats: .shp, .kml, or .kmz) of the project's proposed service area; and
- (f) Documents showing local support for the project, as required by section 4.3 of these Guidelines; and
- (g) If debt financing will be obtained, subrecipients will be required to submit letters of commitment to demonstrate the willingness of the financial institution to provide the funding required to complete the project; and
- (h) For entities required to register with the Missouri Secretary of State to do business in the State, a Certificate of Good Standing from the Secretary; and
- (i) For privately-held entities, identifying information (full legal name, including middle initial, and date of birth) about persons in certain management and ownership positions; and
- (j) Copy of an E Verify Affidavit and applicant's E Verify memorandum of understanding (MOU), required by § 285.530 RSMo, if applicable; and
 - (i) Applicants requesting \$5,000 or less and that have no employees are not required to enroll in E Verify.
 - (ii) For all other applicants, in addition to certifying that the applicant's organization does not employ illegal aliens, all applicants must be enrolled in the E Verify Program and provide a copy of the applicant's E Verify MOU.
 - (iii) The E Verify Program, conducted jointly by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Verification Division and the Social Security Administration (SSA), is designed to provide employment status information to determine the eligibility of applicants for employment. E Verify requires that participating employers use the automated Verification Information System (VIS) to check the SSA and the USCIS databases to verify the employment authorization of ALL newly hired employees. An employer's participation in E Verify is currently free. To access the E Verify website, go to <https://e-verify.uscis.gov/enroll/>.
 - (iv) To access the 'electronically signed MOU' – the following must already be completed: (1) the applicant employer must have successfully enrolled in the E Verify Program; and (2) the applicant employer must have successfully completed the tutorial.
 - (v) To retrieve a copy of an electronically signed MOU, the applicant employer should: (1) Wait until it has received a confirmation email from E Verify / USCIS that the company is successfully enrolled in the program; (2) Log back into the Account; (3) Click on "Edit Company Profile" in the left menu; (4)

Scroll about halfway down and click on the green “View MOU” button. (Make sure all pop-up blockers have been disabled – the electronically signed version pops up in a separate screen).

- (vi) ONLY the applicant employer’s E Verify program administrator can access its electronically signed MOU.

For additional assistance, the applicant employer can contact E Verify using the toll free Help line number, 888 464 4218.

9. Adoption and Community Involvement

Eligible projects will be scored competitively based on an evaluation of the applicant’s broadband adoption plans and community impact, including the following activities:

- 9.1. The offering of service to economically distressed areas of Missouri, as measured by indices of unemployment, poverty, or population loss that are significantly greater than the statewide average (e.g., promotion of low-income assistance programs for service and equipment).
- 9.2. The offering of new or substantially upgraded broadband internet service to significant community institutions including, but not limited to, libraries, educational institutions, public safety facilities, and health-care facilities.
- 9.3. The ability to provide technical support and training to residents, businesses, and institutions in the community of the proposed project for using broadband internet service (e.g., digital literacy training).
- 9.4. Plans to actively promote the adoption of the newly available broadband internet service in the community (e.g., marketing campaign and outreach).
- 9.5. Strong support for the proposed project from residents, businesses, and institutions in the community.
- 9.6. Plans to offer affordable broadband services for residents, businesses, and institutions in the community of the proposed project over the long term.
- 9.7. Other programs designed to meet the needs of the local community.

10. Evaluation of Application and Application Scoring

DED will evaluate project applications using evaluation criteria that take into consideration the following:

- 10.1. Applicant Type: Per federal guidelines, prioritization will be given to broadband networks owned, operated by, or affiliated with local governments, nonprofits and cooperatives.
- 10.2. Affordability: Applications will be evaluated on the pricing of the broadband services to be offered compared to existing broadband services in the proposed service area or based on nationwide averages. Applicants should demonstrate that pricing would be competitive and affordable to their service area.
- 10.3. Critical Need and Equity: Applicants will need to demonstrate the critical need of the proposed area through public engagement activities, including community outreach and letters of support from community leaders. Prioritization will be given to service areas where the majority of households served

are within a Moderate-Income area, Low-Income area, or Qualified Census Tract.

10.4. Matching Funding: DED is not requiring applicants to provide a cost match. However:

- (a) Prioritization will be given to projects for which the applicant is including a private funding match of at least 20%.
- (b) Additional credit will be given to projects receiving local government funding.

Credit will be provided on a graduated scale to applicants that exceed the 20% match prioritization.

10.5. Level of Impact in the Proposed Service Area: DED will evaluate the anticipated broadband improvement scores. As noted previously in these Guidelines, proposed projects must generally be designed to, upon completion, reliably meet or exceed symmetrical 100 Mbps download and upload speeds. Projects submitted that achieve 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speed will receive fewer points and will be further evaluated on the project's ability to scale to 100 Mbps upload speed in the future.

10.6. Project Viability:

- (a) Technical Approach and Related Network Capacity and Performance: Applications will be evaluated on the proposed technological solution and the ability of the proposed network to provide sufficient capacity, as well as scalability, to meet the needs of the households, businesses, and community anchor institutions in the proposed service area. DED will prioritize investments in fiber-optic infrastructure.
- (b) Applicant's Organizational Capability: Applications will be evaluated on the experience and expertise of the project management team, the past record of the applicant with projects of a similar size and scope and the applicant's capacity and readiness. Further, DED will review financial statements to assess the applicant's financial wherewithal to complete the proposed project. DED will also consider the applicant's community involvement and proposed workforce labor plan. Applicants with a history of any recent violations of federal and state labor and employment laws will receive negative points.
- (c) Applicant's Skills, Knowledge, and Experience in Managing Federal Funds: DED will consider an applicant's proposed approach to ensuring compliance with all federal fund requirements. This will include an assessment of the applicant's skills, knowledge, and experience in managing federal funds.

10.7. Reasonableness of Budget: Applications will be evaluated on the reasonableness of the budget based on its clarity, level of detail, appropriateness to the proposed technical and programmatic solutions, and the reasonableness of its costs.

10.8. Sustainability of the Project: Applications will be evaluated on the ability of the project to be sustained beyond the award period. Applicants will need to provide pro forma financial information, market projections, and business plans to demonstrate the applicant's financial ability to maintain the infrastructure over time. Project plans will need to describe the applicant's ability to scale the project by integrating advanced services over time.

10.9. Misrepresentation: An applicant's or subrecipient's negligent or intentional provision to DED, in the application or its attachments, the Program grant agreement, or in any communication or document in connection with the Program, of any document or information that is untrue or incomplete in any material respect at the time of such provision, shall not be eligible for Program participation or Program funds.

DED reserves the right not to fund applications if for any reason the proposed project does not appear to effectively serve the needs of the community, including, but not limited to, when the cost benefit ratio of

the proposed project may be viewed as too high.

11. Grant Agreement

- 11.1. If an applicant's project is awarded a Program grant, the applicant, or subrecipient, will enter into a grant agreement with DED (Grant Agreement), committing to complete the project as set forth in the application, among other obligations.
- 11.2. The Grant Agreement will pass through to the subrecipient the requirements imposed on the State of Missouri under its agreement with Treasury. The Grant Agreement will also include state law and other requirements for Program administration.
- 11.3. Because this Program is federally funded, various federal laws, regulations, and guidance will apply under the Grant Agreement. Prospective applicants are encouraged to acquaint themselves with some of the requirements by visiting these resources:
 - (a) The [Uniform Guidance](#) (when reading these regulations, a prospective applicant should understand that it would become a "subrecipient" receiving a "subaward" from DED/the State, which is the "pass-through entity" (also referred to as a "non-Federal entity");
 - (b) [42 U.S.C. § 802](#), Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund (SFRF);
 - (c) [31 CFR part 35](#), Treasury's SFRF regulations;
 - (d) Treasury's [Compliance and Reporting Guidance: State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds](#);
 - (e) [42 U.S.C. § 804](#), Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF); and
 - (f) Treasury's [Guidance for the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund](#).
- 11.4. Applicants must demonstrate sufficient financial wherewithal to incur the costs associated with completing the work.
- 11.5. As part of the Grant Agreement process, but prior to DED signing the Grant Agreement, subrecipients will be required to submit a letter of credit or performance bond to DED in an amount equal to the total value of the grant award.
- 11.6. The Grant Agreement will also include requirements regarding the following:
 - (a) In addition to documents submitted to obtain reimbursement of costs, subrecipients must submit reports to DED in a format and frequency to be specified by DED, to include speed, pricing, and any data allowance metrics. Reports will be required that allow DED to meet Treasury's reporting requirements for CPF and SFRF.
 - (b) DED will monitor the subrecipient for compliance with the terms of the Grant Agreement and applicable federal laws, regulations, and guidance; and subrecipient will cooperate in all monitoring.
 - (c) Record retention and inspection.
 - (d) Audits relating to the grant, including cooperating with federal and state representatives and providing requested access, information, and records for such audits.
 - (e) If DED determines, based on monitoring, an audit, or otherwise, that a subrecipient is not complying with the terms of the Grant Agreement and applicable federal laws, regulations, and guidance, DED may take actions as set forth in, but not limited to, [2 CFR § 200.339](#).
 - (f) Grant closeout by DED, including a requirement of certification from a professional engineer before the grant will be closed out.
 - (i) The professional engineer: (1) must be certified in Missouri; (2) must not be the engineer who

originally designed the project; and (3) must not have a direct pecuniary interest in the project or an affiliation with an entity providing financial support for the project.

- (ii) The professional engineer must certify that: (1) the project meets the original design as approved by DED; (2) the build has been completed; (3) the design and installation conform to all applicable federal, state, and local requirements and standard engineering practices; and (4) the installed infrastructure will provide the service levels stated in the application.

11.7. Records created in the administration of this Program and in communications about it, including records submitted by and provided to applicants and subrecipients, will be subject to federal and state open records laws. DED may be required to disclose some information in the records relating to the Program or in agency communications upon DED's receipt of a third party request.

11.8. DED may disclose grant records to other state agencies or public governmental bodies in the course of administering the grant.

For additional information, visit ded.mo.gov/arpa. For additional questions, contact the DED team by emailing grants@ded.mo.gov.



Missouri Department of Economic Development

MISSOURI BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION SCORING AND AWARD PROCESS

Introduction to Scoring and Award Process

The Department of Economic Development (DED) will give priority to projects that provide the highest return in public benefits for the public costs incurred. To evaluate the applications for public benefits with respect to the costs incurred, the federal guidelines specify certain priorities that DED must consider. To fulfill this requirement of reviewing applications in an objective and fair manner, applications will be reviewed and evaluated by DED using the following criteria and point values to systematically score and award grants. Applications will be scored through a two-step process based on information provided in the grant application. To ensure that an application receives the best possible score, it should include complete and comprehensive responses to all information requested.

Step one will consist of evaluating the applications against minimum requirements on a pass/fail basis. If an application fails any of these requirements, then it will be rejected and not advanced to the step two scoring process.

Step two will consist of the following criteria and point values.

Table 1: Scoring Overview	
Category	Available Points
Critical Need and Equity	40
Project Viability	40
Level of Impact	30
Affordability	25
Sustainability	20
Applicant Type	15
Budget	15
Private Match	<u>15</u>
	200

Scoring Notes:

1. Private or local matching funds are not required, but applications may be awarded additional points. Up to an additional 10 bonus points will be given to projects receiving local government funding.
2. DED reserves the right to disqualify applications at its discretion. For example, applications that are incomplete, appear to be misleading, or raise significant doubts about the successful completion of the project may be disqualified.

Step 1 Pass/Fail Criteria: Applications must have a Yes response to all minimum criteria in order to advance to the Step 2 scoring evaluation:

Table 2: Minimum Criteria	
Criteria	Yes/No
Applicant is an eligible entity	
Infrastructure is designed to deliver upon completion service that reliably meets or exceeds 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload	
If infrastructure is designed to only meet 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload evaluate the following criteria:	
Application contains evidence to demonstrate 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload speed is impracticable	
Application contains evidence the proposed technology may be scaled to 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload in the future	
Proposed middle-mile connection projects include evidence to demonstrate that new and/or improved last-mile commitments are in place	
Proposed project costs for pole replacement/attachment include evidence to demonstrate cooperation from pole owners within the project area	
Applicant's financial statements demonstrate the financial wherewithal to complete the proposed project as budgeted and if there are cost overruns	
If Applicant requires debt financing, evidence of letters of commitment from financial institutions to provide required financing	
Proposed project has not previously been awarded federal or state funding to achieve speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload	
Proposed project is anticipated to be completed prior to September 30, 2026	

Step 2 Points Evaluation

Critical Need and Equity: 0 to 40 points

Applicants will need to demonstrate the critical need of the proposed area through public engagement activities, including community outreach and letters of support from community leaders. Prioritization will be given to service areas where the majority of households served were negatively economically impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. This includes households in a Qualified Census Tract, Low-Income areas, and Moderate-Income areas.

Table 3: Critical Need and Equity			
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions	Awarded Points
Prioritization of projects serving within Moderate-Income areas, Low-Income areas, and Qualified Census Tracts	20	20 Points: 50% or more of the households in the proposed service area are within Low-Income area or a Qualified Census Tract.	
		15 Points: 50% or more of the households in the proposed service area are within a Moderate-Income areas, Low-Income area, or Qualified Census Tract.	
		10 Points: 25% or more of the households in the proposed service area are within a Moderate-Income area, Low-Income area, or Qualified Census Tract.	
		0 Points: less than 25% of the households in the proposed service area are within a Moderate-Income area, Low-Income area, or Qualified Census Tract.	
Public Engagement	15	15 Points: Significant evidence of critical need established by evidence of widespread public engagement.	
		5 Points: Moderate evidence of critical need established by evidence of widespread public engagement.	
		0 Points: No evidence of critical need established by evidence of widespread public engagement.	
Public Funding Necessity	5	5 Points: The project would not reasonably be anticipated to be completed in the absence of public funding.	
		0 Points: The project would reasonably be anticipated to be completed in the absence of public funding.	

Scoring Notes:

1. If the percentage of qualified households in the proposed service area falls in between two of the target percentages identified in the scoring definitions, points will be awarded by rounding the proposed funding match to the nearest target percentage.
2. Proposed projects with limited or no critical need may result in application disqualification.

Project Viability: – 40 points possible

Technical Approach: 0 to 25 points

Applications will be evaluated on the proposed technological solution and the ability of the proposed network to provide sufficient capacity, as well as scalability, to meet the needs of the households, businesses, and community anchor institutions in the proposed service area. DED will prioritize investments in fiber-optic infrastructure.

Table 4: Technical Approach			
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions	Awarded Points
Technology Performance and Deployment	15	15 Points: Strong evidence provided indicating that the proposed technology will exceed minimum speed and latency expectations with the potential for incremental future capacity/bandwidth increases to offer higher broadband speeds in the future. Strong evidence to validate technology deployment.	
		10 Points: Strong evidence provided indicating that the proposed technology will perform above minimum speed and latency expectations. Sufficient evidence provided that proposed technology will perform at the minimum expectations.	
		5 Points: Sufficient evidence provided that proposed technology will perform at the minimum expectations. Sufficient evidence to validate technology deployment.	
		0 Points: Insufficient evidence provided that proposed technology will perform at the minimum expectations and/or the applicant may not have provided evidence to validate technology deployment.	
Project Readiness	10	10 Points: Project is “shovel ready” and capable of completion within a one-year award period.	
		1 Point: Project is not “shovel ready” but could be completed prior to September 30, 2026.	

Scoring Notes:

1. Proposed networks provide broadband service with 95 percent or more of all peak period measurements of network round-trip latency at or below 80 milliseconds.
2. A zero score in the Technology Performance category may result in application disqualification.
3. Proportional points will be awarded to projects that can be completed between one year and September 30, 2026.

Organizational Capability: 0 to 10 points

Applications will be evaluated on the experience and expertise of the project management team, the past record of the applicant with projects of a similar size and scope and the applicant's capacity and readiness. Further, DED will review financial statements to assess the applicant's financial wherewithal to complete the proposed project. DED will also consider the applicant's community involvement and proposed workforce labor plan. Applicants with a history of any recent violations of federal and state labor and employment laws will receive negative points.

Table 5: Organizational Capability			
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions	Awarded Points
Technical Expertise and Performance History	7	7 Points: Applicant has strong technical expertise to complete the project, the organizational capability to provide on-going support and a strong track record in deploying high speed internet.	
		3 Points: Applicant has the technical expertise to complete the project, the organizational capability to provide on-going support and has limited experience in deploying high speed internet.	
		0 Points: Applicant lacks the technical expertise required to complete the project, does not have the organizational capability to provide on-going support and/or has little or no reliable history of completing similar projects.	
Community Involvement & Labor Plan	3	3 Points: Application includes strong evidence of community involvement with the proposed project, and strong proposed workforce labor plan.	
		0 Points: Limited or no evidence of community involvement provided, and insufficient workforce labor plan.	
		(-3) Points: Applicant has a history of recent violations of federal or state labor and employment laws.	

Scoring Notes:

1. Zero scores in the Technical Expertise, Performance History may result in application disqualification if the applicant's ability to complete the proposed project is in doubt.
2. Substantial violations of federal or state labor and employment laws may result in application disqualification.

Federal Funding Experience: 0 to 5 points

DED will consider an applicant's proposed approach to ensuring compliance with all federal fund requirements. This will include an assessment of the applicant's skills, knowledge and experience in managing federal funds.

Table 6: Federal Funding Experience			
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions	Awarded Points
Federal Funding Experience	5	5 Points: Applicant has sufficient skills, knowledge and experience managing federal funds and sufficient processes and procedures to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant.	
		0 Points: Applicant does not have the skills, knowledge and experience managing federal funds or has insufficient processes and procedures to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant.	
		(-5) Points: Applicant has previous federal funding compliance issues and/or audit findings and has not documented sufficient processes and procedures to prevent compliance issues from reoccurring.	

Scoring Notes:

1. Severe federal funding compliance issues may result in application disqualification.

Level of Impact in the Proposed Service Area: 0 to 30 points

DED will evaluate the anticipated broadband improvement scores. As noted previously in the Guidelines, proposed projects must generally be designed to, upon completion, reliably meet or exceed symmetrical 100 Mbps download and upload speeds. Projects submitted that achieve 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speed will receive fewer points and will be further evaluated on the project's ability to scale to 100 Mbps upload speed in the future.

Table 7: Level of Impact					
Current Speed	≤ 25/3: Unserved			≤ 100/20: Underserved	
Proposed Speed	100 Mbps / 20 Mbps	100 Mbps / 100 Mbps	1 Gbps / 100 Mbps	100 Mbps / 100 Mbps	1 Gbps / 100 Mbps
Total Connections					
0-50	10	15	20	5	10
51-499	15	20	25	10	15
500+	20	25	30	15	20

Scoring Notes:

1. Speeds are shown as download/upload rates and represent the predominant speed within the proposed service area.
2. In order to receive full points within a category, the project must connect 100% of total unserved or underserved households.

Affordability: 0 to 25 points

Applications will be evaluated on the pricing of the broadband services to be offered compared to existing broadband services in the proposed service area or based on nationwide averages. Applicants should demonstrate that pricing would be competitive and affordable to their service area.

Table 8: Affordability			
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions	Awarded Points
Discounted Rates for Low Income Households	15	15 Points: Applicant proposes significantly discounted rates for low-income households and a commitment to maintain the discounted rates in the future.	
		10 Points: Applicant proposes moderately discounted rates for low-income households and a limited commitment to maintain the discounted rates in the future.	
		5 Points: Applicant proposes somewhat discounted rates for low-income households.	
		0 Points: Limited or no evidence of discounted rates for low-income households.	
Adoption Outreach Plan and Household Programming	10	10 Points: Robust adoption outreach plan in place to market the new service and provides additional programming to assist households, businesses and community institutions, such as training or technical support.	
		7 Points: Applicant demonstrates an adoption outreach plan is in place to market to the project area.	
		3 Points: Applicant demonstrates an adoption outreach program will be developed and utilized.	
		0 Points: No adoption outreach plan in place; or proposed adoption outreach plan is likely to have limited effectiveness.	

Scoring Notes:

1. Discounted rates should be supported by documentation of relevant market averages as well as their current and/or expected rates.

Sustainability: 0 to 20 points

Applications will be evaluated on the ability of the project to be sustained beyond the award period. Applicants will need to provide pro forma financial information, market projections, and business plans to demonstrate the applicant's financial ability to maintain the infrastructure over time. Project plans will need to describe the applicant's ability to scale the project by integrating advanced services over time.

Table 9: Sustainability			
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions	Awarded Points
Sustainability	10	10 Points: Application includes a robust sustainability effort to ensure the project succeeds and can serve as a catalyst for future expansions within the surrounding area.	
		5 Points: Application includes an adequate sustainability effort to ensure the project succeeds and can serve as a catalyst for future expansions within the surrounding area.	
		0 Points: Application includes an insufficient sustainability effort to ensure the project succeeds and can serve as a catalyst for future expansions within the surrounding area.	
Scalability	5	5 Points: The proposed project is scalable and has the ability to integrate advanced services over time without requiring future subsidies.	
		0 Points: The proposed project has limited scalability and does not have the ability to integrate advanced services over time.	
Financial Ability to Maintain	5	5 Points: Strong evidence provided of the applicant's ability to maintain the infrastructure over time.	
		0 Points: Insufficient evidence provided to demonstrate the applicant's ability to maintain the infrastructure over time.	

Scoring Notes:

1. Significant doubts about the proposed project's sustainability or the applicant's ability to maintain the infrastructure over time may result in application disqualification.

Applicant Type: 0 to 15 points

DED will award 15 points to broadband networks owned, operated by, or affiliated with local governments, nonprofits and cooperatives.

Budget: 0 to 15 points

Applications will be evaluated on the reasonableness of the budget based on its clarity, level of detail, appropriateness to the proposed technical and programmatic solutions, and the reasonableness of its costs.

Table 10: Budget			
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions	Awarded Points
Cost Reasonableness and Appropriateness	10	10 Points: Strong support provided for reasonableness of the costs and the allocation of funds is sufficient to complete the project.	
		5 Points: Adequate support provided for reasonableness of the costs and the allocation of funds is sufficient to complete the project.	
		0 Points: Insufficient support provided for reasonableness of the costs, or the allocation of funds is not sufficient to complete the project.	
Clarity and Level of Detail	5	5 Points: The budget provided is comprehensive, utilizes the required template, and includes a complete itemization of costs.	
		0 Points: The budget provided is not comprehensive, is not in the required format, or does not include a complete itemization of costs.	

Scoring Notes:

1. Applications with insufficient budget information, substantially unreasonable costs, or costs that are highly inappropriate to the proposed technical and programmatic solutions may be disqualified.

Private Matching Funds: 0 to 15 points

DED is not requiring applicants to provide a cost match. However:

- Prioritization will be given to projects where providers are including a private funding match of at least 20%.
- Additional credit will be given to projects receiving local government funding.

Table 11: Matching Funds			
Category	Available Points	Scoring Definitions	Awarded Points
Private Funding	15	15 Points: Private funding match of at least 50%.	
		11 Points: Private funding match of at least 40%.	
		8 Points: Private funding match of at least 30%.	
		5 Points: Private funding match of at least 20%.	
		0 Points: Private funding match is less than 20%.	

Scoring Notes:

1. If the funding match percentage is in between two of the target percentages identified in the scoring definitions, points will be awarded proportionally to the funding provided.

Local Government Match Bonus: 10 points

DED will award up to a 10-point bonus to projects that receive local government funding commitments. When determining the score, DED will take into account the amount of local funding dedicated to the project provided compared to the total funding the local government received from ARPA. (Local funding is not required to be ARPA funding. DED will use that funding amount only as a reference.)

Total Score:

Table 12: Total Score		
Category	Available Points	Awarded Points
Critical Need and Equity	40	
Project Viability	-	-
Technical Approach	25	
Organizational Capability	10	
Federal Funding Experience	5	
Level of Impact	30	
Affordability	25	
Sustainability	20	
Applicant Type	15	
Budget	15	
Private Matching Funds	15	
Total:	200	
Local Government Match Bonus	10	